HEAVEN'S ALARM TO THE WORLD.

OR

A SERMON, wherein is shewed, That Fearful

Sights

And Signs in Heaven, are the *PRESAGES* of great *CALAMITIES* at hand.

Preached at the Lecture of Boston *in* New-England; *January*, 20. 1680.

By Mr. *INCREASE MATHER.*

The Second *IMPRESSION.*

Rev. 8. 10. *And the third Angel sounded, and there fell a great Star from heaven, burning as it were a Lamp*, &c. Rev. 11. 14. —— *behold, the third Woe cometh quickly.*

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TO THE READER.

CONcerning thoſe admirable; and amazing works of God, which are by us called *Comets*, as under a *Phyſical* and *Mathematical* Conſideration, there are many that have publiſhed their Sentiments, and ſome to good purpoſe and edification. The ſcope of the enſuing diſcourſe, is only (that being moſt proper for one under my circumſtances) to make a *Theological* Improvement thereof. There are that do propound this inquiry, *How many Comets hath the world taken notice of ſince the firſt Creation?* Which is indeed a Queſtion that no mortal living is able to give a full and certain anſwer unto. It is true that ſundry learned and worthy Writers (eſpeciall *Lavater* and *Alſted*) have attempted to give us the Hiſtory of *Comets*, nor hath their labour been wholly in vain or unprofitable. In the Authors but now mentioned (though others give us a larger account) We do not read of above eleven *Blazing Stars*, in thoſe Ages (for about four thouſand years) that were before the Incarnation of the Son of God: Doubtleſs there were more; but the Records of thoſe times are very imperfect, ſo that we cannot ſay, when they appeared, or by whom obſerved. The number of *Comets* ſeen theſe laſt 1680. years, is judged to be about 158. Some ſpeak of a farr greater number, but others queſtion whether there have been ſo many, inaſmuch as diverſe appearances of the ſame

Comet have been set down by Historians as if they had been so many distinct *Comets*. Such *Stars* (for so rather than *Meteors* have the Observations of later times evinced them to be) have ever been accounted *Ominous Presages* of great mutations and miseryes coming upon the world. So did the wise men amongst the Gentiles of old (*a*) their Orators, Poets, Philosophers

(a) *Ab ultima antiquitatis memoria notatum est Cometas semper calamitatum prænuncios fuisse.* Cicer. *de nat. Deor. Lib.* 2.

——— *diri toties arsere Cometæ.* Virg.

Et terris nunquam spectaclum impune Cometæ.
Claudian.

———*Quando nocte Cometæ.*
Sanguinei lugubre rubent. ———

ever esteem of them. And the observation hath been sadly verified, by the experience of latter Ages; consonant to the holy Scriptures of Truth, where (both in the Old Testament and in the New) Prodigious Sights and Signs in the heavens are mentioned as the presages of great Calamityes. Some object that after the blazing Star, Anno, 1097. A very fertile prosperous year followed, but they forget that the next year a direful Plague raged in the World. Others object that *Wickliffs* and *Luthers* Reformations, had *Comets* to procede them. But (to say nothing of the Warrs and fatal changes which in those dayes hapned in diverse parts of the World) two or three exceptions do not invalidate the truth of a general Assertion. If such signs are commonly Presages of sore Calamityes, that's enough to awaken men out of their Lethargyes, though now and then, once in an hundred times it should happen to be otherwayes, which yer remains to be demonstrated. As for their notion who think that *Comets* are signs that the

the light of the Goſpel ſhall be further diſperſed in the world, or that they portend mercy to the Church, and Judgement to others only; it is to be wiſhed that there were a ſolid foundation for ſuch a conceipt: But alas! Diviſions amongſt the Lord's profeſſing People themſelves, and great Perſecutions have oftentimes been the fatal conſequents of ſuch portentous ſigns. And if publick calamities come upon the world, it is not to be expected but that the Lord's People, whilſt they are mixed amongſt others (and too much partaking with them in their ſins) living in an evil world, will have their ſhare therein. It hath ever been ſo, and is ever like to be ſo, until *the ſign of the Son of Man appear.*

As for the *Blazing Star*, which hath occaſioned this preſent Diſcourſe, it was a terrible ſight indeed, eſpecially about the middle of *December* laſt, the ſtream of ſuch a ſtupendous magnitude, as that few men now living ever beheld the like. That in the year, 1618. was looked upon as very prodigious *(b)* yet the radiant Locks of it were not at firſt though at laſt extended above 45. degrees in length, whenas this was about 60. degrees. Yet I cannot ſay there never was any ſo diſmal ſince the world began, for I have read of diverſe no leſs *fearfull. Seneca* (*c*) ſpeaketh of a *Comet* whoſe magnitude was equal with that of the Sun: And of another that prodigiouſly diffuſed it ſelf over the *Via lactea*; and of another very formidable, after which *Helice* and *Buris*, Cityes in *Achaia* periſhed by a fearful Inundation. That which appeared Anno Chriſti, 1452. (*d*) was above 50. degrees in length. Writers ſpeak of ſome

(b) *Hiſtory of great Brittain*, Pag. 128. Clark's *Example*, *Vol.* 2. p. 256.

(c) *Nat. Queſt.* Lib. 7. C. 15, 16.

(d) *Teſte* Naugclero.

Blazing

Blazing Star that hath been attended with a much longer ſtream; Yea, of one that was 90. and another that was 130. degrees. Nevertheleſs, one ſo fearful to behold as this, hath rarely been known: And without controverſie ſome great thing is portended thereby. I ſee little reaſon to conclude, that it is an *Omen* of happy dayes to the world untill God hath made way for mercy by great Judgements. Eſpecially conſidering, that we are fallen into the dregs of time, wherein the dayes muſt and ſhall be perilous. It was long ſince (*e*) conjectured, that in the Ages more immediatly preceding the day of Judgement, *Comets* and other *fearful Sights* ſhould be more frequent than formerly, as intimations of the great and amazing Revolutions in thoſe Ages to be accompliſhed. It will not be long before the ſecond Wo Trumpet hath done its work and then the third Wo will come quickly. The Lord grant that we may be accounted worthy to ſtand before the Son of Man at His coming.

(e) *Keckerm. Phyſ. ubi de Cometis. p. mihi* 1697. *Magius de exuſtione Mundi. l.* 3. c. 10.

The learned and judicious *Hoſpinian* (*f*) writes that Anno 729. There was a *Comet* ſeen firſt in the Eaſt, in the Morning, and after in the Weſt in the Evening (juſt as with our preſent *Blazing Star*) *Quaſi Orienti ſimul & Occidenti magni alicujus mali Præſagi.* We have cauſe to fear that this *Comet* ſo appearing doth preſage and portend great Calamityes both to the Eaſt and the Weſt, *h. e.* to the World in *General.* That ſome notable day of the Lord is at hand, when ſuch Signs appear, we may believe. Hence are they called (*g*) *Prodigia* a *Præoſtendendo*, becauſe they ſhew before hand that *ſomething Remarkabl*

(f) *De Origine Templorum.* p. 59.

(g) V. *Melchior Jun* Orat Par. 1. p. 425.

able is a coming. Further then this I would not go about to *determine*; only we may modestly *conjecture* as to particular events like to happen. I have ever thought it unwarrantable, for men, not acted by an extraordinary Spirit, to make particular and positive determinations concerning the Judgements (or the Persons eminently concerned therein) by such Prodigie menaced. The great *Melanchon* hath been thought (by some great (*h*) Authors) to proceed something too far in applications of this nature. *Peucerus* (*Melanchon*'s Son in Law) expresseth himself more warily, in his *Teratoscopia*, or Discourse about *Divination from fearful Sights.* Yet he affirms that when ever great changes in the world have been near, prodigious Sights have been the forerunners thereof; and that unusual Sights are seldom or never known to have hapned without great and miserable changes attending them. Only it is possible for particular Persons and places through faith in Christ, and in a way of humble Repentance, to obtain a lengthening out of their tranquility. The Gentiles of old (*i*) when they beheld *fearfull Sights in Heaven,* would presently betake themselves to their Prayers and Piacular Sacrifices (in imitation of whom idolatrous Papists have been wont in like cases to go to their Reliques, Amulets, Processions, &c.) that so evils *Ominated* thereby, might (if possible) be averted. And shall not Professours of the true Religion, be awakened by such awful works of God, to go unto Jesus Christ (our only Sacrifice) and to pray earnestly that impending wrath may be removed, and the mercy of Heaven obtained? Shall we not be humbled, as for other Sins, so for that, of not hearkning to His VVord? The con-

(h) *Voetius in Disp. de Sign.*

(i) *Alexand. ab Alex.* l. 5. c. 27. *Cœlius Rodogi.* l. 3. c. 27.

tempt

tempt whereof provoketh him to ſpeak by *fearful Sights and Signs from Heaven*, which ſeems to be the (k) meaning of that Scripture, *Act.* 2. 19. The Lord is many wayes calling upon men, to repent, and pray, and get into the Ark before the Flood come. Indeed we ſhould not be diſmayed at the Signs of Heaven, nevertheleſs (as that Emperor ſaid) *We ought to fear that God who hath made this blazing ſtar.* Surely, we have cauſe to ſpeak, as ſometimes the Pſalmiſt did, *My fleſh trembles for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgements.*

(k) *Strigelius & Toſſanus ad Locum.*

Boſton, *N-E.*
Febr. 16.
1680.

INCREASE MATHER.

HEAVEN'S

ALARM

TO THE

WORLD.

Luk. 21. 11. ——— *Fearful Sights, and great Signs ſhall there be from Heaven.*

THE Lord Jeſus Chriſt, having told his Diſciples that great Calamityes were haſtning upon Jeruſalem, and upon the Jewiſh Nation; they enquire when thoſe things ſhould come to paſs, and what *Signs* ſhould precede and preſage the Judgements

Judgements predicted. This we see in the 7th. Verse of this Chapter, *They asked Him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be: and what* Sign *will there be when these things shall come to pass?* In Answer unto which Enquiry, the Lord Christ doth in this Context mention several things, some of which were to be more remote, and others more immediate *Signs* of that miserable Destruction, which the sacred and unerring lips of Christ had foretold. 1. False Christs would arise, *V.* 8. *Many shall come in my Name, saying, I am Christ*, &c. The Jews had rejected the true Messiah, therefore God would punish them with false Christs, as an intimation that the dayes of vengeance were coming upon the Nation for that Sin of theirs. The Apostle *John* (Christ's beloved Disciple) doth imitate his Master in mentioning the same thing as a Sign that the Jewish World was near unto its end, 1 *Joh.* 2. 18. *There are many Antichrists* b *h. e.* false Christs, such as came

b Mede's *Works*, *P.* 818, 872.

in Christ's Name,

Name, *i. e.* that pretended unto his Office, Dignity, and Authority; and thereby, (ſaith the Apoſtle,) *we know that it is the laſt time*; ſc. the Jewiſh State, both Civil and Eccleſiaſtical, was come unto the laſt hour: The Period of the Jewiſh World was at hand. And the Hiſtoryes of thoſe times ſpeak of one *Theudas*, and others, that pretended to be Chriſts, and that the River *Jordan* ſhould give way to them as once it did to *Joſhuah*; ſo that a multitude of ſilly Jews were ſeduced, & perſwaded to follow them, unto their own deſtruction. 2. Another Sign mentioned, is that of Warres, and Commotions, *V.* 9. *When you ſhall hear of Wars and Commotions, be not terrified: for theſe things muſt firſt come to paſs; but the end is not by & by.* This may be underſtood of thoſe *Inteſtine* Warres and *Commotions*, which hapned in the Land of *Judea*. The *Galileans* took up Arms againſt the *Samaritans*. At *c* one time, in a Mutiny there were twenty Thouſand ſlain. Theſe were *Commotions*, which cauſed

c Joſeph. *Antiq. L.* 20. *C.* 4, 5. *De Bello* Jud. *L.* 2, *Cap.* 11.

a great

great noiſe and conſternation amongſt men (eſpecially amongſt thoſe of the Jewiſh Nation) in thoſe dayes. Hence that which is by *Luke* expreſſed by *Wars* and *Commotions*, is by *Mark* called *Troubles*; and by *Matthew*, *Wars and Rumors of Wars*. And theſe things hapned about twenty years before the final deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and fatal overthrow of the *Jewiſh* Nation; therefore was it ſaid, *The end is not by and by*. 3. Another Sign is that mentioned in the 10*th*. *V*. *Nation ſhall riſe up againſt Nation, and Kingdom againſt Kingdom*. * So indeed it came to paſs, when the *Jewish* Nation roſe up againſt the *Romane* Nation; and their Neighbouring Nations, *Syrians*, *Samaritans*, &c. roſe againſt them. In thoſe dayes the Land of *Judea* was divided into ſeveral Provinces, which did bear the names of *Kingdoms*, and the chief Governours of them are according to the *Hebrew* Style, called *Kings*, being the Vice-Roys which the *Romane* Emperours did ſubſtitute to

* Joſeph. *de Bello Judaico. Lib.* 2. *C.* 19. 20, 21.

to be over thoſe places.. See 1 *King.* 22. 47. Hence we read of King *Herod*, King *Agrippa*, &c. *d* Now the people of theſe Provinces were ſet one againſt another; therefore it is ſaid, *Kingdom ſhal riſe up againſt Kingdom.* All theſe troubles were forerunners and Intimations of the fatal Calamity a coming, and did help to make way thereunto. 4. There were to be *great Earth-Quakes in divers Places.* In the beginning of this Verſe. Such things are uſually ſigns of Divine Anger, and ſo portentous of great Changes and Calamityes: the Intimations of State-Quakes, yea of Nation-Quakes. Hiſtorians ſpeak of very tremendoſe Earthquakes which hapned in diverſe places *f* whereby

d Grotius, & Lucas Brugenſis *in* Matth. 24. 7.

f *Sex circiter annos, ante Urbis excidium, tres Aſiæ clariſſimas urbes, Terræ-motu everſas eſſe, teſtatur* Oroſius. *L.* 7. Tacitus *ſcribit, ſub* Tiberio Nerone, *duodecim civitates in* Aſia *Terræ-motu collapſas eſſe: Ac denuo in quinto ejus regni anno, tredecim urbes Terræ-motu cecidiſſe.*

Vide Bertram. *in* Matth. 24. 7.

ſeveral

ſeveral famous Cities periſhed, not long before *Jeruſalem* was deſtroyed. 5. *Famines.* Probably that Prediction doth reſpect the ſame Famine which *Agabus* propheſied of, *Act.* 11. 28. Under which the Land of *Judea* ſuffered deeply. Whence it was that the Apoſtle *Paul* was very ſollicitous to obtain ſome Relief for the Chriſtian *Jews* then at *Jeruſalem.* 6 *Peſtilences.* Theſe two Judgements, (*Limoi kai Loimoi*, as in the *Greek* it is elegantly expreſſed) of *Famine, and Peſtilence*, do often go together, the latter following at the heels of the former, and being occaſioned thereby. 7. *Fearful Sights and great Signs in Heaven:* which are the words now before us to conſider of. Fearful Sights] *Gr. Phobetra* [*Terriculamenta:*] Such Sights as ſtrike a terror into the hearts of men that are the Spectators of them. *Signs from Heaven*] *viz.* Prodigious Signs. Theſe things are mentioned as the more immediate Preſages of thoſe Miſeryes that were coming upon *Jeruſalem*, with the whole *Jewiſh* Nation.

Doct

Doct. *That Prodigious awful Sights and Signs in Heaven, are oftentimes, the Presages of great Calamity coming upon the World.*

For the further clearing of this Doctrine, three things may be enquired into. 1. What Sights and Signs are the Presages of Calamity? 2. How it doth appear that they are so? 3. What Calamityes such Signs do commonly presage?

Q. 1. *What Sights and Signs in Heaven are Presages of Calamity?*

Ans. 1. There are Signs in the *starry Heaven.* The great God, when he made the World, placed the Stars in Heaven, to be for Signs as to Events that in the ordinary Course of Nature should come to pass. *Gen.* 1. 14. *God said, Let there be lights in the Firmament of heaven, and let them be for Signs.* They are for Signs of Heat and Cold, wet and dry Seasons, and the like. Hence the Lord spake to *Job*, as in Ch. 38. 31. *Canst thou bind the sweet Influences of* Pleiades, *or loose the bands of* Orion? The *Pleiades* are the same with those

thoſe which men call the *Seven Starres*. When the Sun is in that Conſtellation with the *Pleiades*, it hath great power and Influence upon the Earth. It is Spring-time then. As for *Orion* *f* it is a Winter-Conſtellation, cauſing Cold, whereby the pores of the earth are bound. It binds the Earth from bearing Fruit, and as it were binds the hands of Men from labour in their particular Callings. When that Conſtellation appears in the Evening (as it doth in the ninth Moneth) 'tis a ſign that the Earth ſhall be bound, as hath been expreſſed. Yea, and it is a ſign that Storms and tempeſtuous ſeaſons are to be expected. Therefore was it by the Poet called *Nimboſus Orion*. And hence the Stars are called by the name of the *Signs of heaven*, Jer. 10. 2. *Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not diſmayed at the Signs of heaven.* Which words may well be underſtood concerning the Stars and Conſtellations in the heavens. *g* For the Hea-

f See Mr. Caryl *on* Job, 38. 31.

g Ita locum interpretantur Rab. Solomon Jarchi, *& ex illo* Lyranus. Voetius *Diſp. ſelect. Par.* 2. *P.* 923.

then

then, the *Chaldeans* especially (among whom the *Jews* were then going to dwell) superstitiously imagin'd that the Stars were Rulers of the World, and did therefore stand in fear of them, and worship them; which heathenish Idolatry the Lord doth caution and charge his People against. The Stars of Heaven are for natural Signs. Their Motions and Appearances are significations that such and such things, will according to that Course of Nature which God hath setled, come to pass in the World. There are also *extraordinary Stars*, sometimes appearing in the Heavens. God in his Providence doth so order, as that sometimes, *Blazing Stars* are seen in heaven. Such *Stars* are called *Comets*, from the stream like long Hair, which useth to attend them. Such a Star is *Prodigious*, and a *Fearful Sight*. And of this may the words of the Text be understood. The *Jewish* [g] Historian reports, that not long before the destruction of *Jerusalem*, there was a *Blazing Starre* in

[g] Warres of Jews, l 7. c 12

form of a Sword, which ſeemed to impend over the City, for a Year together. This now was a *fearful Sight*, and a *great Sign from Heaven*.

2 There are fearful Sights and Signs appearing in the *Air*, ſometimes in the lower heaven, which we move & breathe in. Prodigious Meteors are ſometimes ſeen there. And ſtrange Appearances, which are either ſeen, or heard ſpeaking. Of theſe fearful ſights and ſigns, is the Text likewiſe to be interpreted. *Joſephus* relates, that before the *Romane* Army deſtroyed *Jeruſalem*, there were ſeen in the Air, Iron Chariots, and Souldiers in battel aray; and in the night time, a great Light appeared in the Temple, for half an hour together, with as much brightneſs as if it had been noon day; and a Voice was heard ſaying, *Let us be gone from hence.*

Qu. 2. *How doth it appear that ſuch Fearful Sights are Preſages of Calamityes coming upon the World?*

Anſ. 1. The Scripture is clear for this. The Text before us doth expreſly declare no

no leſs. And the Prophet *Joel* foretelling the ſame Calamityes which this Text hath reference unto, ſaith alſo, that prodigious Signs in heaven ſhould preſage and portend them. *Joel*, 2. 30, 31. *I will ſhew Wonders in the heaven.* Truly, Blazing Stars are Wonders in the heaven. *And in the Earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of ſmoke before the great and the terrible Day of the Lord come.* When *Jeruſalem* was deſtroyed, and the *Jewiſh* ſtate diſſolved, that was a great and notable Day of the Lord, a Type of the great Day of Judgement. *Wonders*, even prodigious and amazing Signs ſhould precede it. A very learned *i* and judicious Interpreter conceiveth that the *Hebrews* of old did uſe to call Comets, or Blazing Stars by that name of *A Pillar of Smoke*, becauſe ſometimes they appear like Pillars of ſmoke, and that therefore when it is ſaid, there ſhall be Pillars of ſmoke before the terrible Day of the Lord, the true meaning and intendment of thoſe Expreſſions is, that

(i) Mede *Diſcourſe*. 6. *P*. 37

that Comets ſhould precede and preſage the miſeryes coming upon the *Jewiſh* Nation. Yea, the Scripture informs us, that *Fearful Sights and Signs in heaven*, ſhall precede the Great and General Day of Judgement, as Preſages thereof. *Luk.* 21. 25. *There ſhall be Signs in the Starres:* meaning that ſuch things ſhould be obſerved among the Stars in heaven, as would be a Sign that Chriſt's coming to Judge the World, did approach. Wherefore in Verſe 28. it is ſaid, *When theſe things come to paſs, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your Redemption draweth nigh.* The Day of *Judgement*, is a Day of *Redemption*, and is ſo called in other Scriptures, *Epheſ.* 4. 30. Then ſhall the Bodies of the Saints be redeemed from the power of the Grave; and both Bodies and Souls, redeemed from all Evils of ſin and of ſuffering. *Rom.* 8. 23. 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. At the Reſurrection, in the laſt Day, will the great Redemption be to the Saints of God, and the greateſt Miſeryes to the Wicked that ever were thought of. And

ſigns

Signs in heaven ſhall precede them. And hence it is, that *Fearful Sights* are called *Signs* in the Scripture; it is partly on this account, in that they are *Signs* that the Lord is coming forth out of his holy habitation, to puniſh the World for their Iniquityes.

2. The Experience of many Ages doth bear witneſs to the truth of this Doctrine. If the Scripture were ſilent about this matter, the Experience both of former and later Ages doth ſufficiently and ſadly confirm the Truth in hand. Hence an *k* heathen Writer could ſay, *If God be about to punish a City or a Nation, He is wont first to give warning of it by Prodigyes*, by Signs from heaven. And commonly it is ſo, that when ſtupendous Signs go before, ſtupendous Judgements follow after. Some *l* have written large Volumes con-

k Cum Deus puniturus ſit gentem vel urbem, Prodigiis id prius ſolet ſignificare, Herod. *l.* 6. *Lege* Melchioris Junij *Orat. Par.* 1. *p.* 425. (*l*) Conradus Lycoſthenes *Librum edidit in quo omnia collegit Prodigia, quæ ab exordio mundi oſtenſa ſunt.* Zanch. *de natura Dei, p.* 414.

cerning the Fearful Sights, which have at ſeveral times and places been obſerved in the World; and the Judgements and Miſeryes which have followed.

3. Many times ſuch fearful Sights are tokens of God's Anger; which is another Reaſon why they are called *Signs*, as being Signs of the Anger of God: Signs that flaming Vengeance is kindled, and burning in Heaven againſt a ſinful World. Now when God is angry, then Publick Judgements come, as Teſtimonyes of Divine Diſpleaſure. *Perſonal* Afflictions are not alwayes Evidences of God's Anger, as we ſee in *Job*: but *Publick* Judgements are ever wont to be ſo. 'Tis thought that the ninetieth Pſalm was penned by *Moſes* on occaſion of a publick Judgement, the Plague which broke in upon the Children of *Iſrael*, and ſwept away many Thouſands of them: And ſaith he, *We are conſumed by thy Anger, & by thy Wrath are we troubled*, V. 7. So that if Publick Judgements come, God is angry, and his Wrath kindled: He doth by

by them teſtify, and power down his righteous Diſpleaſure from Heaven. Inaſmuch then as fearful Sights are Tokens of God's Anger, they are Preſages of great and publick Calamities. As the *Rainbow* (though a natural Sign) is a token of Divine *Favour*; ſo are prodigious Sights Tokens of Divine *Anger*.

4. Theſe fearful Sights are many times Preſages of thoſe things which make way for great Changes and Calamityes to come upon the World. They are oftentimes (Blazing Stars [m] in a more ſpecial manner are ſo) the Preſages of the death of great; yea, and of worthy Men. Is not the fatal downfal of *Auguſtulus* (the laſt *Roman* Emperour) in the Scripture emblematically ſet forth, by that of a *Blazing-Star* [n] falling to the ground?

m Damaſcen. *l.* 2. *c.* 6. Iſidor. *l.* 3. *Etymol.*

——— *crinemq; timendi*
Syderis, & terris mutantem regna Cometam. Lucan.

Anno 1471. *ardet Cometa: Hoc anno multi Principes moriuntur. Anno* 1477. *multi Principes obierunt.* Alſted.

n Mede *in* Apoc. 8. 10.

Rev. 8. 10. *There fell a great ſtar from heaven, burning as it were a lamp.* It is conceived, that the ruine of *Auguſtulus*, dethroned by *Odoacer* the *Herulian*, was ſignified by thoſe words, and that he is reſembled to that ſort of *Comets*, which is called *Lampadias*. And when there is a Star burning and blazing in heaven, commonly it proves fatal to ſome *Auguſtulus*; whence great Changes & miſeryes enſue. Yea, the Death of *worthy* (as well as *great*) Perſonages, is ſometimes portended by ſuch Signs. A little before great *Conſtantine*'s death, a blazing Star appeared, and infinite miſeryes followed. In the Year ° 1556. a Comet (then vulgarly called a *fiery Beeſom*) was ſeen; and ſoon after, many learned, uſeful, worthy Men dyed; whoſe death was an unſpeakable loſs and miſery to the places where they had lived.

° Alſted. *Chronol. C.* 49. *ubi de Cometis.* *See* Spotwood's *Hiſt.* Scotl. p. 94.

Queſt. 3. *What Calamityes do ſuch fearful Sights and Signs in heaven preſage?*

Anſ. We muſt not be particular and poſitive

positive in Interpretations of things of this nature. When a fearful Sight appears in heaven, which the whole World cannot but take notice of, now to make a particular and absolute determination that such a Place, or such a Person, such a Judgement, is certainly intended thereby, is too much boldness. In general, we may safely say, that there is just cause to expect that great Calamityes are at hand: but what Persons or Places shall more eminently fall under those Judgements, is not for us to determine; but we must leave that with God, who best knows what himself intends to do.

p V. Voet. in *Disp. de Signis.* P. 919, 930.

This being premised, we proceed in Answering the Enquiry before us.

1. Sometimes such Signs are Presages of great Persecutions coming upon the Church of God. The Lord in mercy to his People, giveth them such Warnings, that so they may prepare for what's a coming, or make haste to enter into the Chambers of safety, as it were for a little moment,

moment, till the Indignation be overpaſt. *Nero's* bloudy Perſecution had a *Blazing Star* to precede it. The ſame is true concerning the *Arian* Hereſy and perſecution, that flood ſpoken of in the *Revelation*, which the Dragon caſt out of his mouth, and whereby the Woman, the Church, fled into the Wilderneſs, was in eminent danger of being ſwallowed up and devoured, *Rev.* 12. 15.

2. Sometimes ſuch Signs in heaven are Preſages of miſerable Dearths and Scarcity. That Blazing Star impending over *Jeruſalem*, which the Text hath reference unto, was attended with a terrible Famine, whereby multitudes periſhed *q*. And therefore ſuch Signs are frequently portentous of thoſe Judgements, which

q *In the Years after Chriſt*, 876. 948. 964. *there were Blazing Stars ſeen, preſaging Famines & other Judgements.* In Annis 674, 675, 676. *Comets appeared, and ſore Droughts followed: In ſome Countryes it rained not for* 3 *Years together. The like Miſeryes followed the Comet* Anno 1477. In Annis 594. 1527. 1542. *Comets were ſeen, and Armies of Locuſts followed, devouring the Fruits of the Earth.*

cauſe

cauſe Want and ſcarcity; *e. gr.* of ſore Droughts and Blaſtings, and the multiplication of noxious Creatures that deſtroy the Fruits of the Earth. All which particulars I could confirm unto you by approved Hiſtory, which declareth how they have all been preſaged by *Blazing Stars* in heaven.

3. Lamentable Deaths and Deſtructions amongſt Men, have been oftentimes preſaged by ſuch Sights in heaven. Sudden and amazing Ruines, by r *Earthquakes*, by *Inundations*, by *Fire*, and the like awful Viſitations, have been thereby portended. Eſpecially deſtructions by mortal and contagious Diſeaſes. That ſtrange Diſeaſe, known by the name of

r *In the Years* 66, 78. 79, and 868. *Comets appeared, after which terrible Earthquakes happed in many Places.* Annis 377, 912, 1530. *there were blazing ſtars appearing; and Inundations followed in diverſe places. Quickly after the Comet* Anno 882. *the famous City of* Triers *was burnt to the ground.* Alſted. *ubi ſupra. Memorabile fuit Portentum Terræ-motus* Anno 1618. *quando ruina montis, quâ totum Oppidum plurium, & Vicus* Schilanus *cum* 900 *Hominibus oppreſſa.*

Sudor

Sudor Anglicanus, which in a peculiar manner purſued thoſe of the *Engliſh* Nation, even when in ſtrange Lands; whence they were dreaded in all places where they came, there was a *Blazing Star* that did precede it. Eſpecially that which is, of all Diſeaſes miſerable Mortals are ſubject unto, the moſt terrible, I mean the *Plague* of *Peſtilence*, s it is frequently thus preſaged. Such Sights are *Heaven's Alarm* to a ſinful World, to give notice that God hath bent his Bow, and made his Arrows ready, and that if Sinners turn not, the Arrows of Peſtilence and Death ſhall fall down upon them ſpeedily. This might be confirmed by a multitude of Inſtances; but it needs not. Our own Experience is enough. We cannot but remember the *Blazing Star* that was ſeen but 16

s *Anno* 1457. *Cometa quem* nigrum *appellabant, apparuit, ſecuta eſt Peſtis diuturnior. Anno* 1472. *Duo Cometæ: Peſtis adeo ſæviit, ut Cognati proximi deſererent ſuos. Idem eodem Libro. Anno* 1006. *Cometa, quem Peſtis excepit, ut vivi cum mortuis ſepelirentur: multa Oppida plane exhauſit.*

Years

Years agoe, and a terrible *Plague* followed; ſo that in our own Nation, near upon an *hundred thouſand* were ſwept away in one City, and in one Year. And it is reported, that immediately after that great *Blazing Starre*, which appeared above threeſcore years ago, God ſent the *Plague* † amongſt the Natives in this Land, which ſwept them away in ſuch multitudes, as that the living were not enough to bury the dead. So did the Lord caſt out the Heathen before this his People, that the way might thereby be prepared unto our more peaceable ſettlement here. The Lord in mercy grant, that we may never, by becoming like unto the Heathen in Profaneneſs and Irreligion, provoke Him to do unto us, as He hath done unto them.

† *See Mr.* Gorge's *Deſcription of* New-Engl. *Pag.* 27.

4. Such fearful Sights and Signs in heaven, are uſual Preſages of War among the Nations, and ſo of thoſe Devaſtations and Deſolations which the Sword leaveth behind it. Prodigyes on the *Earth* doe ſometimes

ſometimes betoken War and Bloodſhed, 2 *King.* 3. 22. And Signs in *Heaven* do no leſs. Thus in my Text, the *Romane* Sword, which made the *Jewiſh* Nation deſolate (according to *Daniel*'s Propheſy Ch. 9. 27.) was portended by a fearful *Blazing Star* in heaven. *u*

And when *Alaricus* the *Goth* made ſuch a terrible Irruption upon the *Romane* Empire, like a ſtorm of Hail, and Fire, and Blood, *Rev.* 8. 7. *Blazing Stars* in heaven preceded thoſe Calamityes. When *Attila*, who they ſay, called himſelf *Flagellum Dei*, God's Whip, to ſcourge the World for their Wickedneſs, when he was armed to be the Executioner of divine Vengeance upon the Earth, deſtroying Cityes, and laying Nations waſte before him, *Blazing Stars* were ſeen preceding and portending thoſe miſerable Times. In like manner, when the *Saracens* (the firſt Wo-Trumpet) and the *Turks* (the

u —— *Belli mala ſigna Cometæ.* Tibul.
Stella relucebit Gladij mortalibus index. Sibyl. *Or. l.* 3.

ſecond

ſecond VVo-Trumpet, propheſied of in the *Revelation*) were let looſe upon the Apoſtate Chriſtian VVorld, *Blazing Starres*, and *Fearful Sights in heaven* did precede thoſe woful Dayes. And are there not ſome alive, and here before the Lord this day, that can remember the *blazing Star* which appeared in the *9th.* and in the *10th* Moneths, in the Year *1618.* and the next Year began that unhappy VVar in *Germany*, which proved ſo fatal to the *Proteſtant* Intereſt there.

Thus have we ſeen what Judgements and Calamityes, *Fearful Sights in heaven* are commonly the Preſages of. As for that *SIGN* in heaven, now appearing, (which hath occaſioned me to ſpeak this Word at this time) what Calamityes may be portended thereby, which of the Judgements mentioned, or whether all of them be not thereby preſaged, I ſhall not ſay; but leave it unto God and Time to diſcover. Only in general, we have cauſe to fear, that ſweeping Judgements are thereby ſignified; that the Lord is coming

coming down from Heaven with a long Beesom of Destruction, which shall sweep away a world of Sinners before it.

I conclude with a word of *Application*: Nor would I speak any thing, but the words of Truth and soberness, as becometh a Messenger of Christ to doe, when speaking in His Name.

USE. *Let us hence be Exhorted to approve our selves as those that are under the solemn, awful Warnings of God, ought to do.* I need not say (for every one knows it) that there is a Fearful Sight and Sign appearing in the heavens: Such a formidable *Blazing-star*, as that the like hath seldom been observed. It concerns us then, to hearken to the voice of the Lord therein; who by such tremendous Sights is speaking awfully to the children of Men. Hear then. *Heaven's Alarm* this day. You will say, But what should we now do? *What doth the Lord expect from us, when there are such dreadful Presages of Evils coming upon the World?*

Answ.

Anſw. 1. It now concerns us to be *awakened out of all Security.* That's one of God's ends (his declared end) in cauſing ſuch *Fearful Sights* to be taken notice of, that ſo he might awaken a ſecure ſleeping World. And indeed the Lord manifeſts his Goodneſs and Compaſſion towards ſinful Creatures therein. It was a pious Speech of that *w* Emperour, who beeing ſomewhat terrified at the ſight of a *Blazing-ſtarre,* ſaid to thoſe about him, *Let us admire the Clemency of that God, who before He ſmites us, cauſeth ſuch Signs in heaven, that ſo He might awaken us out of our Security.* O let us beware of crying Peace, Peace, when the Day of Deſtruction is at hand. O take heed of ſleeping, and dreaming of nothing but worldly Proſperity at ſuch a Time as this. When the Lord Jeſus Chriſt had told his Diſciples, that calamitous Times were a coming, and menti-

w Ejus Clementiam laudare tenemur, qui noſtram inertiam, talibus monere dignatur indicijs. Carolus Magnus; *vel ut alij volunt,* Ludovicus I. Caroli Magni *filius.*

oned the Signs and Preſages thereof, He bids them *Watch therefore*, Luk. 21. 36. Let us not then pleaſe our ſelves, with imagining that ſuch Fearful Sights are Signs of *Mercy* only, and not of *Judgement*. The contrary unto which Opinion, hath been confirmed by more than two hundred Inſtances *x*. Men are exceeding apt to interpret ſuch things in a way of favour to themſelves, when nothing leſs is intended thereby. So when theſe *Fearful Sights and Signs in heaven*, which my Text ſpeaketh of, were ſeen at *Jeruſalem*, the *Jews* did interpret them as *good Omens* to themſelves; and as ominous of Deſtruction to their Enemies. The Prodigies in *Germany* * were looked upon by the *Proteſtants* as Signs of Deliverance unto them, and of Deſtruction to their Enemies. But alaſs! the

x *Conſulatur* Heidfeld. Sphynx *Philoſoph.* p. 1087. *Univerſali Experientia, & hominum conſenſu, præjudicatum eſt, Cometas magnas mutationes portendere.* Voet. *Diſp. de ſignis* p. 929.

* *Vid.* Clark's *Martyrology* p. 311. &c.

the Event was quite otherwiſe. And let us not make our ſelves ſecure, by ſaying or thinking, that the Lord by ſuch *fearful Sights* ſpeaks to *others onely*, and not unto *us*. As *Veſpaſian* the Emperour, when z there was a long *hairy Comet* ſeen, he did but deride at it, and make a Joke of it, ſaying, That it concerned the *Parthians* that wore long hair, and not him, who was bald: but within a Year, *Veſpaſian* himſelf (and not the *Parthian*) dyed. Such fearful Sights are uſually Signs, that thoſe Judgements, which are (as *Tertullian* ſpeaks) *Tonſuræ humani generis*, God's ſharp Razors on Mankind, whereby He doth poll; his Sythe, whereby He doth ſhear down multitudes of ſinful Creatures, doe draw near: In which reſpect, there is no doubt to be made of it, but that God by this *Blazing-ſtar*, is ſpeaking to other Places, and not to *New-England* onely. And it may be, He is declaring to that generation of hairy Scalps, who go on ſtill in their Treſpaſſes, that the day of their

z *Teſtante* Suetonio.

mity isat hand, and that the things which ſhal come upon them make haſte. *A ſtrange Sight* doth betoken *ſtrange Puniſhment* coming upon thoſe that have been prodigious workers of Iniquity. Yet let not us promiſe to our ſelves nothing but Proſperity in the doleful & the bitter Day, when there ſhall be Lamentation generally. I am perſwaded, that the floods of great water are coming. I am perſwaded that God is about to open the windows of heaven, and to pour down the Cataracts of his Wrath, ere this Generation (wherein *Atheiſm* and *Profaneneſs* are come to ſuch a prodigious height) I ſay, ere this Generation is paſſed away. But what reaſon have we to think that no drops of the fatal Storm ſhall come near to us? If we ſo conclude, we may provoke the Lord to ſay, *The Sinners of my People ſhall dye by the Sword, who ſay, The Evil ſhall not overtake us nor prevent us.* To be awakened out of Security, and tremblingly to wait for the good Pleaſure of God, whatever it may be, is the moſt likely

way

way to find Reſt in the day of Trouble. So did the Prophet find it, *Hab.* 3. 16. *When I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered, I trembled in my ſelf, that I might reſt in the Day of Trouble.* When the thundring voice of Judgement was heard, his heart trembled at it, ſo did he find Reſt in the Day of Trouble.

2. *This ſhould put us upon preparing for another Day of Trouble.* And this ſhould we do the rather, ſince the Changes portended by this *Comet*, are like to come *ſpeedily* as well as *certainly*. *Joſeph* ſaid to *Pharaoh*, *For that the Dream is doubled, it is becauſe the thing is eſtabliſhed by God, & God will ſhortly bring it to paſs.* Gen. 41. 32. Doth not the *doubled Appearance* of this Fearful Sight in the heavens ſpeak as much? Let us then prepare for Trouble. We ſhould not onely expect it; but ſo expect it, as to prepare for it. Certainly we have reaſon ſo to do. If there had been no *Blazing-ſtar*, yet upon other accounts, we have cauſe to expect and

prepare for *another Day of Trouble*, which ſeems to be haſtning upon thee O *NEW-ENGLAND*, and upon thee, O *BOSTON*! The *Sins* which are amongſt us, are ſurer and blacker Signs of Judgement, than any *Signs in heaven*, that we may think of. I ſay the Sins, the *Pride*, the *Profaneneſs*, the *Worldlineſs*, the general *Security* and *Iniquity* that prevaileth amongſt us. Eſpecially conſidering how little good all former Judgements and Diſpenſations have done upon us. What *Fiery Deſolations* hath the Lord made amongſt us? The Lord hath been roaring out of *Sion*. Such roaring Judgements have been amongſt us, as that the Report of them hath been heard afar off. *Sword*, *Death*, and *Fire*. But (alaſs! O Lord God) may it not be ſaid concerning the generality of men, They return not to Him that hath been ſmiting of them? They are the ſame ſince the *War*, ſince the *Small-Pox*, ſince the *Fires*, that they were before. Ah! what will come next? We have cauſe to expect, and it will be

our

our vviſdom to prepare for *another Day of Trouble* ſeven times greater than the former. It grieveth me to ſpeak thus, but I cannot forbear. I feel that the Word of the Lord is like a fire in a mans bones, and it will break out. The Lord God hath ſpoken, who can but propheſy? And now know for certain, that if deſtroying Judgements and Death overtake any in their Sins, and ſweep them avvay to Hell, their blood ſhall be upon their own heads. For the Lord hath fired his Beacon in the heavens, among the Stars of God there; the *Fearful Sight* is not yet out of ſight. The *Warning-piece* in heaven is going off, now then if the Lord diſcharge his *Murdering-pieces* from on high, and men be found in their Sins, unfit for Death, their blood ſhall be upon them. They had Warning given them that the Sword was a coming: Lo, the Lord himſelf gave them the warning; but they would not take vvarning, their blood ſhall be upon them. Moreover, if Troubles ſhould not come, yet it vvill be vviſdom to pre-

pare for them. If the Lord, after Hee hath ſent his Angel to ſtand with a drawn Sword over *Jeruſalem*, ſhould be entreated to ſpare us, yet it will never do us hurt to prepare for the moſt deadly Arrows of Affliction that may light upon us, vvhilſt in this Vale of Tears.

3. *We ſhould do what in us lyes to divert thoſe Judgements, which ſeem to be impending, and blazing over our heads.* This word of Comfort, I may ſafely ſpeak, *The Lord's Threatenings are not abſolute; but conditional.* So far as we in theſe ends of the Earth, theſe goings down of the Sun, are ſpoken unto, by this *Sign in the heavens*, it is poſſible we may eſcape the Evils threatened thereby, if we duely hearken to the Voice of God therein. *Jer.* 18. 7, 8. *At what time I ſpeak concerning a Nation & concerniug a Kingdome, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to deſtroy it: if that Nation againſt whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil that I thought to doe unto them.* So that when deſolating Judgements are threatned,

threatned, either by the Word, or by the awful Works of God, thoſe denunciations of Wrath are not *abſolute*, but *conditional*. If Repentance intervene, the Evils which otherwiſe muſt be looked for, may be diverted. See therefore *Jer.* 36 3, 7. *It may be the houſe of* Judah *will hear all the Evil which I purpoſe to do unto them, that they may return every man from his evil way.* Ay, a general Repentance is that which will do, if every man turn from his evil way, *that I may forgive their iniquity and their ſin. It may be they will preſent their Supplication before the Lord*, &c. This is that which the Lord would have; therefore He ſaith, I'le ſtir up the ſpirit of my Miniſters and Ambaſſadors, that they ſhall declare and denounce my Judgements againſt a ſinful Generation. *It may be they will hear.* And I'le ſpeak by awful Signs from heaven, that may be as Heraulds to proclaim *Wrath and Wo* to the World, *It may be they will hear*, and then ſhall their ſins be forgiven. You will ſay, *But what ſhall we do, that ſo the Judge-*

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ments which are blazing over us, may be diverted from us? *Anſw.* Pray, and cry mightily to Heaven. For this let every one that is godly pray unto the Lord in a time wherein He may be found, and before the Floods of great waters come nigh unto us. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, having warned his Diſciples of approaching Calamityes, He concludeth vvith an Exhortation unto Prayer, *Luk*, 21 36. *Pray alwayes, that you may be accounted worthy to eſcape all theſe things that ſhall come to paſs.* Prayer may do much toward the averting of wrathful Judgements and Deſolations. When the Lord threatned to bring Famin and Deſtruction upon his People, *Amos* fell to praying; and God ſaid, *This ſhall not be*, this Judgement and threatned deſolation ſhall not be. *Amos* 7. 3, 6. O then, let us deprecate impending Judgements. Do vve ſee the Sword *blazing* over us? Let it put us upon crying to God, that that Judgement may be diverted, and not return upon us again ſo ſpeedily. Do vve ſee the Arrows of Peſti

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lence and Death *blazing* over us? Oh! Pray that the deſtroying Angel may not be ſent to vvalk in darkneſs, and to vvaſte at noon day. Doth God threaten our very Heavens? O pray unto Him, that He vvould not take away *Stars* and ſend *Comets* to ſucceed them. Pray that the Lord Jeſus, vvho holds the Stars in His right Hand, may continue thoſe in the Firmament of his Churches (the Heaven vvhich his own Hand hath planted) who are indeed *Stars*, vvilling to impart the Light vvhich they have received from Chriſt, unto his People: and that *wandring Stars, blazing Stars, ſeducing Spirits* may never come in their room. I am not vvithout fear, that this vvill at laſt be the Judgement of God upon *New England* and upon theſe Churches. Pray that it may never be. And our *Supplications* ſhould be attended vvith deep *Humiliation*, Zeph. 2. 2, 3. *Gather your ſelves together*, i. e. Come before the Lord in a vvay of publick, ſolemn Humiliation, *before the decree*, i. e. the Judgement written

and

and threatned, *bring forth, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you: seek the Lord — It may be you shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.* Thus then, should we do in this day, when there are such dark & angry Clouds hanging over our heads; and we know not how soon they may break upon us. And truly, if our *Lectures*, were, some of them, turned into dayes of *Prayer*, at such a time as this, it is no more than what there is cause for. And there is one thing more, that should in special be remembred by us; a thing that hath been much talk'd of; but little hath been done in it, that is, *Reformation! Reformation!* When the Prophet *Jonah* was sent of God to preach and say, *Yet forty dayes, and* Nineveh *shall be destroyed:* that was a more awful Sign of Desolation, than if they had seen a *Blazing-star* hanging over the City, menacing the Ruine thereof: Yet when they repented, and *reformed* (though it was but an external Reformation) the Lord spared them

forty

forty years longer. Ah! *New-England*, will thou not do more than *Nineveh*? ſhall there not be ſo much as an *external Reformation* of thoſe things that provoke the glorious Eyes of Heaven? Will not the haughty Daughters of Sion, reform their Pride in Apparel? Will they have *the Attire of an Harlot*? Will they lay out their Hair, and wear their falſe Locks, their Borders, and Towers like *Comets*, about their heads? Will they do ſo, untill God ſend his Arrows from Heaven, to ſmite them down into the Grave, where the dayes of Darkneſs ſhall be many? And ſhall there be ſtill ſuch a multitude of *Licenſed Drinking-Houſes* (and Town-dwellers frequenting them) to the Shame of *Boſton*, and to the Infamy of *New-England*; notwithſtanding the Teſtimony which God, and his Servants have given againſt it? How then ſhall we think to eſcape in the Day of the Lord's Anger; if a *Reformation*, ſo much as in theſe External, which it is ſo eaſy to reform, will not be obtained? O Return, Return unto the

the Lord. And in that way let us betake our ſelves unto the ſhading Wings of the Lord Jeſus! Do we not hear Him ſpeaking to us, as ſometimes unto *Jeruſalem*? Mat. 23. 37. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how often would I have gathered thee, as an Hen her Chickens under her wings.* Saith the Lord, The *Roman* Eagles, thoſe birds of prey, are haſtening upon you: But if you would have come under My Wings, you ſhould have been ſafe enough. Even ſo, doth not the Lord ſay, O *New England*! *New England*! doſt thou not know that the birds of prey are deſigning to devour thee? But my Wings are broad enough to ſecure and ſhelter thee, when the black and ſtormy tempeſt ſhall break upon the World. If vve be found a praying, an humble, a reforming People, vvee need not doubt but that *Under the ſhadow of His Wings, we ſhall make our Refuge, untill the Calamity be overpaſt.*